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McNair Summer Research Journal 2012

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RONALD E. McNAIR

2012



Summer Research Journal

Volume 17



The College at
BROCKPORT
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

TRiO

RONALD E. McNAIR
POST-BACCALAUREATE
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM



2012 Ronald E. McNair Summer Research Journal—Volume 17



The College at
BROCKPORT
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

About TRiO Programs

TRiO refers to six programs funded by the Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The original TRiO Programs are Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services. The name TRiO was retained even though more programs were added. The additional programs are Educational Opportunity Centers, the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, and a training program for TRiO staff. In general, TRiO programs are focused on providing educational opportunities to first-generation college students who come from low-income families and students with disabilities.

About Ronald E. McNair

Ronald Erwin McNair was born on October 21, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina. He attended North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, where he graduated magna cum laude in 1971 with a Bachelor of Science in physics. He continued his education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, earning his PhD in 1976, and went on to become a recognized expert in the field of laser technology with the Hughes Laboratory. In 1978, McNair realized his dream of becoming an astronaut; selected from a pool of 10,000 applicants for the

space shuttle program, McNair became the second African American to fly in space. After his death aboard the space shuttle Challenger in 1986, Congress approved funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program, which is dedicated to the support and promotion of the high standards of achievement exemplified by McNair. Those who knew McNair characterized him as fearless, determined, and accustomed to applying all available resources to any problem he faced.

The Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program at The College at Brockport, State University of New York

Designed for first-generation and low-income students as well as students from groups underrepresented at the doctoral level, the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program at The College at Brockport encourages talented students to pursue a doctoral degree. The program promotes graduate studies by providing participants with seminars and workshops germane to the pursuit of graduate education, a mentored summer research experience, and opportunities to present this research at professional conferences.

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

Barbara J. Thompson

Project Director, Ronald E. McNair
Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program

Dear Readers

I am pleased to introduce you to the 17th volume of the Ronald E. McNair Summer Research Journal. This journal is a compilation of the work our scholars complete each summer as they learn to conduct research in their chosen field.

Under the guidance of dedicated faculty members, McNair scholars design and implement projects that teach them the fundamentals of creating and using knowledge and provide them with their first taste of the graduate and professional world they are preparing to enter. The Summer Research Program takes our students beyond the average undergraduate experience, setting them apart from their peers as it elevates their education to a level not usually available to students pursuing a bachelor's degree.

I am sincerely grateful to the 40 faculty members who invest so much of themselves in moving our students forward. The expertise and encouragement they provide is critical to the success of our McNair scholars, not only during their undergraduate years, but most importantly when they enter the competitive world of graduate school. The fact that 247 of our 646 McNair alumni have successfully earned master's

degrees, 20 JDs or MDs, 4 EdDs and 32 PhDs is a tribute to the quality of the work our mentors expect and elicit from their students. Those involved in nurturing our future professionals in this manner deserve to be highly recommended.

I look forward to seeing our scholars enter the ranks of academia and continue the process of personally investing in future generations, passing on what they have received through the dedication of our mentors, program staff, and campus community.

Acknowledgements

The McNair staff would like to take this opportunity to thank President John R. Halstead, Provost Anne Huot, and Vice Provost Michael Fox who have assisted in strengthening our program this past year. While the Office of Academic Affairs administers the program, the support base represents a university-wide commitment to achieving our program goals. The US Department of Education, other TRIO Programs, the Research Foundation and the entire institution collectively lend their efforts to the program's success.



Corporate Fraud: What can be done to prevent it?

**Shelby Alvarez, Business Management
and Accounting**

Mentor: Kari A. Smoker, JD

After Enron filed for bankruptcy on December 2, 2001, many people were in disbelief. After a thorough investigation, it was disclosed that top executives were increasing stock prices by hiding the actual losses from share holders, issuing positive statements through the press and misrepresenting public statements. This research represents an attempt to evaluate why these scandals occur and what can be done to prevent them from happening.

The Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) suggests that prospective investors should check out the company's financial statements before buying any stock. The SEC is very stringent on preventing fraud; they also suggest that future investors should compare promised yields with current returns. Unfortunately, many investors lost money when they chose to invest in Enron because they did not review their financial statements.

Kenneth L. Lay, chairman and chief executive of Enron, struggled to maintain a perfect image for his company. He was well aware of Enron's future demise, but continued to place Enron on a pedestal stating that it would become "the world's greatest company." But within the company were greed, lies, and debt. As an executive of the company stated, "We didn't know we were living on borrowed time."

Research on why people commit fraudulent acts can be explained using the Fraud Triangle developed by Dr. Donald Cressey, a criminologist whose research focuses on embezzlers. Dr. Cressey believes three factors must be present in order to determine if there is fraud: opportunity, pressure, and rationalization.

Opportunity is the possibility for the employee to abuse their position of trust in order to solve their financial issues. Pressure is usually based on the fact that the employee has pressing financial problems. Lastly, with rationalization the employee does not feel that they are committing a crime; they simply believe that they are not getting paid enough so taking money from the company is no problem. The top executives of Enron clearly were committing fraud, but they were so confident in their fraudulent activity that they didn't think anyone would find out.

Normally, fraud is not easy to detect because the person committing the fraud may be a trusted employee, but there are ways to conclude if there is fraud in the workplace. Those employees who are responsible for signing checks and reconciling bank accounts should be carefully watched, or that responsibility should be divided in order to prevent further speculation. Employees or employers must carefully analyze every single detail in the workforce. Employees and employers should not discuss their financial problems in the workplace, but if someone in the workplace is constantly complaining about their issues, it should raise questions. Business owners should also have an independent consultant to ensure cash controls are being followed. Finally, job rotation should be present in the workforce so that the chances of an employee committing a fraudulent act are limited.

Unfortunately, fraud occurs frequently, but there are ways to prevent it from occurring. Taking the necessary precautions can save the company from losing both money and their reputation.



A Brief Review of the Current Inquiries into Negated Text and Metacomprehension

David A. Agudo, Psychology

Mentor: Sara J. Margolin, PhD

Studies have found that negation (i.e., words such as no, not, or never) is detrimental to readers' comprehension and judgments of comprehension. Various studies in negation and metacomprehension examine concepts such as activation levels, mental representations, time course, delays, and several methods to improve negation comprehension and metacomprehension. Studying negation comprehension has practical implications in academia and everyday life, whether reading a newspaper or a memo on the job. Therefore, this difficult wording within text demands attention.

Work on negation has revealed that readers process negative text slower and comprehend it less accurately. This processing discrepancy has been attributed to differential mental representations of the text. The availability of words and the rate at which readers devise alternatives is adversely impacted. Likewise, mental simulations are toggled between affirmative and negative situations. For instance, given the sentence "David drinks water but not juice," the word juice is less available to readers, and when mentally simulating the sentence requires readers to imagine a scenario where David both drinks juice and does not drink juice.

Metacomprehension studies regularly show that metacomprehension judgments among readers are typically poor. Finding methods to improve these judgments is the focal point of much of this research. Improvement techniques for metacomprehension include keyword generation, rereading, and summarization. In some instances, these improvement

techniques help more after a delay. How well one monitors their understanding of text has also been indicated by examining what the reader's expectation of the tested material will be. Integrative research on metacomprehension is limited, in that it only focuses on metacomprehension as a cognitive function and rarely combines it with other variables such as negation or attention span. In contrast, there is more applicable use of what self monitoring studies have shown, such as the formerly mentioned keyword generation, rereading, summarization techniques, and expectation effects. This is in part because such methods encourage readers to work with the information more, improving comprehension.

More recent investigations address the concerns to integration within the fields of negation and metacomprehension. In a study focused on incorporating a delay between negated expository stimuli and comprehension testing, results showed that while readers were accurate in determining that they understood negated text more poorly than non-negated text, they were unable to connect this difficulty to improving their comprehension of the text. However, the short delay examined was insufficient to aid participants in their comprehension of negation or connecting it to their metacomprehension. The proposed research looks to expand on this recent study, by including more delay variables, and narrative stimuli in addition to expository formats. This study hopes to determine a situation where readers may be able to connect their understanding of the increased difficulty of negated text and their comprehension accuracy of that text.



Factors that Impede Adequate Quality of Care in Hispanics

Hugo J. Avalos, Biology

Mentor: Rey Sia, PhD

The purpose of this research is to explore if there are factors which may impede access to adequate quality of health care for Hispanics. Millions of US Hispanics are currently without health insurance. This study will feature several factors such as language, perceived quality of care, nativity/immigration status, citizenship, and racial/ethnic bias and show how disparities in quality of care are affected by more than one of these factors.

Literature on Hispanic quality of health care alludes to disparities in the healthcare system that affect US Hispanics. These disparities are brought upon by one or a combination of such factors as listed above. Language is one important factor that prevents Hispanics from accessing adequate care, especially if he/she is not native born or an undocumented immigrant. DuBard & Gizlice found that 55% of the Spanish-speaking Hispanics showed a lack of health insurance compared to the 23% of English-speaking Hispanics (2008). Nativity/immigration status and citizenship have also shown to affect access to care. Research has shown that when comparing lack of access to health insurance within different Hispanic subpopulations, Puerto Ricans showed 16% as opposed to a 29% rate shown by Mexican-Americans, illustrating the importance of citizenship and access to care (Livingston, Minushkin & Cohn, 2008). This study will observe all the factors in detail and show how each affects adequate quality of care in Hispanics.

A survey questionnaire will collect data measuring perceived quality of care, racial/ethnic bias, etc. This

brief, 17-question survey will be distributed to 120 participants over two social venues. One will be at a women's advocate non-profit organization called Mercy Center in the Bronx, NY, and the other will be in the Light of the World Church and its different ministries in Rochester, NY. Sixty participants will be selected from each location and participants will be asked by word of mouth if they wish to participate. Among questions addressing the factors above, common demographic and socioeconomic questions will also be featured to address any possible issues.

Expected results will show a negative perceived healthcare outcome for Spanish-speaking Hispanics compared to English-speaking Hispanics. Language is expected to be a common factor that impedes quality health care in Hispanics. A combination of factors such as citizenship, nativity, and language will create a field where perceived racial/ethnic bias can be measured. Immigration/nativity will allow for different ethnicities to be measured in terms of access to care. Perceived quality of care data will derive from participant responses to questions regarding clinical setting (actual time spent with the doctor) and healthcare provider interactions.

The expected results propose that Spanish-speaking Hispanics will have a more difficult time navigating the US healthcare system due to a variety of factors, especially language and immigration status. Since participants will hail from different Hispanic/Latino countries, differences in nationality will help provide a better understanding of how these factors affect Hispanics.



African American Lesbian Identity: A Literary Lens

**Pandora Brinkley, Women and
Gender Studies**

Mentor: Barbara LeSavoy, PhD

Using a literary analysis of the film *Pariah* (2011) and writings by Audre Lorde (1982, 1996, 2002, 2004), this research examined racism, homophobia, culture, and religion in the African American community to help answer the research question: How does homophobia in the African American community and family affect lesbian identity? It seems that when an African American woman identifies as lesbian, she faces amplified hardships and stigmas of homophobia.

Racism and its ideology during slavery created stereotypes that are still ingrained in people's thought processes today. These negative stereotypes have left many African Americans with distorted views of their cultural and sexual identities, causing many questions about race and sexuality to go unanswered. "In many Black families, for example, choosing a homosexual identity is seen as directly resulting from becoming too integrated into ...White culture and represents a 'White disease'" (Bing, 2004). For this reason, and because there are a limited number of nationally recognized African American lesbian organizations, supportive family and community ties hold increased importance.

Religion is significant to African American culture. Changing times show that many religious institutions are softening their positions regarding Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans, and Queer (LGBTQ) identities, and some have put in place programs that are useful to members of the LGBTQ community. However, many religious institutions are still unwilling to have open discussion on LGBTQ issues, which makes it difficult for LGBTQ church members to receive support and/or help. This anti-homosexual attitude forces many

LGBTQ community members, though not excluded from the faith services, to conceal their sexual orientation rather than to feel comfortable in the church and worship without harassment or social alienation. As such, African American lesbians withhold coming out because they do not want to jeopardize losing the support they already have as a racial minority. This leads many lesbians to falsely claim heterosexual identity in order to maintain close relationships within their families and communities. These relationships provide safe places of acceptance and support for many African American lesbians. The fear of being victimized or ostracized by their family or within their community dictates how and when African American lesbians "come out."

The review of various literary works suggests that African American lesbians develop multiple identities to help them navigate through racism, homophobia, and cultural and religious conflicts prevalent in a hetero-patriarchal world. These multiple identities present challenges when trying to unite them to represent a "whole" person accepted and supported by family and community. More research is needed that accurately reflects the struggles specific to African American lesbian experiences to better understand how the relationship between race, sexuality, and coping strategies affect identity. Additionally, research is necessary to help engage family and community to address questions on sexual orientation, eliminate harmful myths about LGBTQ identity, and combat homophobia to encourage support for LGBTQ individuals, especially African American lesbians.



Predictors of, and Barriers to, Success in the Nursing Student (RN) Pathway

Myriam A. Louis, Health Science

Mentor: Michael J. Ray, MA

The nursing shortage is a topic of concern for a myriad of health professionals, particularly practicing nurses and nursing educators. Nursing as a profession in the United States has experienced a number of personnel shortages throughout its history, especially during times of national crisis and war such as during the Civil War, World War II, and the Great Depression (Goodin 2003). Today, continued nursing shortages are the result of much more complicated changes throughout the profession. Some of these changes include: the rate and demographics of individuals applying to nursing schools, the elevation of requirements for nursing licensure, and the ability of nursing employers to recruit and retain adequate numbers.

This study is based on a systematic review of the literature that is available from the following literature databases: Academic Search Complete, ERIC EBSCO, and Health Source Nursing Academic Edition. The key terms searched within this study included: nursing student and achievement, nursing student and attrition, and year one and hired RN. We examine the literature through a model that assumes three main stages: “nursing intent” (nursing applicant),

nursing student, and early professional (employed and working as a nurse). Within each article, factors were identified that were seen as contributing to success, or as a barrier to success, within the three components of the nursing pathway.

Previous literature has pointed out various indicators of success. We term “success” as it relates to both the profession of nursing and the education of nursing. In terms of this study, success is understood when a person carries out the best practices from applicant to hired nurse. In the same sense, barriers to success are when the individual does not, or cannot, carry out the best practices from one of the three categories.

While much of the literature looks at any one of the three stages individually, this project seeks to explore those factors that are common or persist across the stages. In doing so, we aim to understand the process that individuals go through to become a nurse. We can also identify factors in the process itself that may act as contributors to, or possible inducers of, the current nursing shortage. Identifying these common factors will add greatly to our understanding of best practices in nursing education.



Predictors that Correlate to Obesity and Postpartum Depression

Agnes Navarro, Nursing

Mentor: Kathleen Peterson, PhD, RN, PNP

Background

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a significant public health concern. The number of American women who are overweight or obese is at an all-time high, and PPD affects one in eight women. Obesity maintains a strong association with screening positive for PPD compared to women of normal weight ($p < .01$). Research about the relationship between obesity and PPD is limited; therefore it's difficult to identify whether obese patients are at a higher risk. Among the 1,053 women in the LaCoursiere study, 14.4% of normal weight women screened positive for depression, and PPD increased progressively as body mass index (BMI) increased. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research that defined guidelines to prevent, detect, and treat PPD.

Approximately 13% of new mothers experience postpartum symptoms which often go undetected. The consequences of an undetected or untreated PPD can have a direct negative effect on mothers and infants. Research suggests that mothers can continue to have recurrent or persistent depression which interferes with mother and baby bonding, and possibly lead to behavior problems and developmental delays. The effect of an undiagnosed and untreated PPD is what makes identifying at-risk women so important.

Purpose

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to identify what characteristics obese women and women of ideal weight cope with, thus placing them at increased risk for PPD. The characteristics that will be analyzed are: BMI, race, education, insurance status, marital status, vaginal or cesarean birth, presence of depression or severe depression, or any other chronic health issues. Isolating specific characteristics will be significant to clinical practice and health care providers (MD/NP) as it may help identify at-risk women and address these characteristics in their individualized patient care plan. An early diagnosis to treat PPD can be thus significant in improving quality of life.

Method

This study will be a retrospective chart review of 150 patient charts from a family medical center with a collaborative review of literature. Reviewing patient charts will provide the demographics and health history obtained by the (MD/NP). The process by which the instrument was developed is a collaborative effort by Katrina Krause and Dy LaCoursiere. The criteria for selecting charts are women with a BMI > 20 and a history of PPD. The purpose is to investigate whether women are at greater risk of developing PPD with a BMI greater

than or equal to 29 compared to women of ideal weight. This methodological approach will also address gaps in current research: a lack of cultural diversity, a normal weight comparison group, and women who are severely depressed and who are normally less likely to take part in a study.

Possible Clinical Implications

We hope the findings will confirm the following clinical implications and recommendations: First, obese women may need more assistance with depressive symptoms. Second, health care providers should administer screening tests early to detect symptoms of PPD to provide immediate treatment. Finally, family members and patients need to be educated regarding signs, symptoms, severity, and consequences of PPD. Clearly, identifying the characteristics in at-risk women is crucial in providing quality patient care.



Racial Bias in Women and Gender: A Call for Change

**Lucienne Nicholson, Women and
Gender Studies**

Mentors: Barbara L. LeSavoy, PhD
Barbara J. Thompson, MA

This research on Black Feminist Standpoint Theory is the result of one semester studying Women and Gender Studies (WMS). At the end of the term I observed the course content was overwhelmingly representing the perspective of white European women's rights. Consequently, as a woman of color, for my final paper I wrote a personal manifesto to protest the absence of the voices of women of color; this manifesto strongly influenced my decision to continue to investigate the literature of black female activists. I hope my research will answer the following questions: Is there recognition of the contributions of black female scholars and activists in WMS? Who is a feminist and by whose definition? Is it realistic for black feminist scholars to expect to have voice in a white-normative, patriarchal space in academe? Is there credible literary evidence to support the position in this manifesto's declaration of racial bias against black female scholars in women and gender studies in academe?

Despite this apparent paucity of black feminist voices in women studies courses, the preliminary research of black feminist and activists' literature has produced significant resources dating back to the 19th century. This project will use the original works of mostly black feminist authors and their critics to study the racial relationship between white and black feminists in the institution and in the social and political arena.

This project is still in its very early stages, which includes the locating of appropriate sources and reading material; information collected thus far consists of original texts, referenced works in journals, articles, and e-books. This list is expected to increase over time and includes the study of the voices of notable black feminist women scholars and activists such as Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins, and bell hooks. All three authors write about black women in the margin of mainstream women and gender studies in academia; this research will also include other female voices not as recognized outside of black academe including such luminaries as Anna Julia Cooper and Maria Stewart, among others. By thoroughly investigating courageous historical black women who fought to secure social, political, and economic rights for their race, this project hopes to arrive at a better understanding of the word "feminist/feminine." For clarification, in this preliminary stage this research is not espousing a new theory nor is it looking to support any existing feminist theory. What is different about this research is that it is eschewing the "feminist" label to focus on uncovering the goals and accomplishments of black women who fight for equal rights and to see if their work was seminal in advancing the black women's voice.



Academic Implications of Reading and Meta-Comprehension Accuracy in College Students

Sarah Page, Psychology and Health Science
Mentor: Barbara J. Thompson, MA

Understanding text has always been an important aspect in expanding knowledge. While college students' retention of class material is often tested, there is little further examination of students' active comprehension-monitoring during the act of reading. Meta-comprehension is the awareness of one's own understanding (or lack thereof) of material. Meta-comprehension accuracy, then, describes how correct one's judgment of their understanding is. High accuracy is defined as a small difference between the person's judgment rating and their actual comprehension score of the text. So meta-comprehension is "do I understand what I am reading?" and meta-comprehension accuracy is "how correct was I in my judgments of what I thought I understood?" This research examines factors affecting students' meta-comprehension accuracy such as the presence of prompts, length of time spent in college, and how it indirectly relates to undergraduate academic performance. In order to study this, this research project will be using quantitative measures through administering a survey. The first part of the survey will include demographic information such as age, gender, major and class. Cumulative GPA within and outside of major will serve as measurement of academic implication. There are two survey versions, one which includes the prompt to "actively ask yourself if you understand the text as you are reading" and one that lacks it. There will be instructions on both to record, in tallies,

occurrences of meta-comprehension during reading. After reading the brief passage, each participant will rate their understanding of the text and will be given a comprehension test that includes multiple choice and a few short answer questions. After scoring the comprehension test, we will determine the amount of variance between the participants' judgments and their actual scores and present this in a positive or negative percentage. A positive value would mean their judgment rating was higher than comprehension, indicating an overconfidence bias. On the other hand, a negative score would show under confidence. I will then use SPSS to find correlations between meta-comprehension accuracy, GPA, presence of prompt, class standing, and meta-comprehension occurrence. I expect to find a positive correlation between GPA and meta-comprehension accuracy and also that the presence of the prompt will increase occurrence of meta-comprehension and therefore increase accuracy. Finally, as the length of exposure to college increases, meta-comprehension accuracy will increase. If these expectations are evidenced in the research, this could have implications on reading strategies of the many undergraduate students interested in improving their GPA. Also, if it is found that the amount of credit hours positively correlates with meta-comprehension accuracy, this shows that college is doing well at enhancing knowledge expansion.



Class, Race, Religion, and Power: An Examination of Colonial Militias in Massachusetts and Virginia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century

Garrett W. Roe, History

Mentor: Owen S. Ireland, PhD

Protecting one's community during the colonial period in North America was important to the colonists' survival. The militia were armed citizens of each community that banded together to defend their hearths and homes. The militia was well entrenched in its society, for most citizens were involved in it.

Historians have examined the colonial militia in regards to the militia's origins, effectiveness, and social composition. Scholars have examined these forces on the town and county level, but most research has been conducted in the broader context of the individual colonies. John Shy was a pioneer in "A New Look at Colonial Militia," when he argued that militias were not static institutions but adapted and changed over the course of the colonial period and varied among the colonies. His research inspired other historians to consider further research focusing on the distinctive features of the militia throughout the colonies.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of the colonial militias in Massachusetts and Virginia as well as a better understanding of their societies. The uniqueness of this study derives from its analysis of the culture found in the militia of the two regions, and then comparing those findings to reveal similarities and differences of the two regions.

Methodology

The first step in this study is to analyze the military structures in both Massachusetts and Virginia. Through an investigation of acts and laws, the information regarding the framework of each colony's militia forces, organization, recruitment, election of officers, restrictions on eligibility as well as the defensive and offensive capabilities will be discovered.

Once the framework of the two colonies' forces is understood, the study will shift to a deeper analysis of the social composition of the militia. Through muster rolls and other records detailing how militias were involved in their society, a greater understanding of how their civilian lives intersected with their military roles will be reached.

The next phase of the study focuses on the cultural attitudes of those involved with the militia which includes officers and soldiers, ministers, and leading colonial administrators. Based on the thoughts and reflections pertaining to these military forces, a deeper understanding of their cultures will be obtained. Sources include personal papers and diaries, religious sermons, and primary source reflections from the time period.

The final phase of this study is to take the information on Virginia and Massachusetts and compare the two to see how different or how similar they were in regards to their cultures and societies.

Conclusion

The hypothesis of this study is that Massachusetts and Virginia will have a similar military composition with some variance and that the relationships between officers and men in the militia will mirror those found in the social hierarchies of their respective societies. In addition, the Massachusetts militias will show an egalitarian manner reflective of its society while the Virginian militias have some aspects of an egalitarian culture but emulate the social unrest indicative of its society.



Queer Studies: How Important is it on College Campuses?

Sherly Ureña, Women and Gender Studies

Mentor: Barbara LeSavoy, PhD

Queer Studies is a field in academia that is quickly growing. However, queer theory, queer space, and queer identity are areas of knowledge not well-represented in college curricula. In addition, the difference between Gay/Lesbian theory and Queer theory is often indistinguishable. This is significant since in this study, the word queer refers to Queer Studies, which aims to standardize any identity, whereas Gay and Lesbian Studies is specific to gay/lesbian identities. With the rise of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, and Ally or Asexual (LGBTQIA) activity on college campuses, there also should be an increase in LGBTQIA-centered academic study. This project is an investigation as to the status of Queer Studies on college campuses and will attempt to answer the following questions: What is the level of awareness of queer space, queer theory, and queer identity on the College at Brockport campus? How important is it to educate college students on queer studies?

For the purposes of this study, The College at Brockport is the research site. A survey will be administered to roughly 30 students currently taking Introduction to Women and Gender Studies. This enables a broad sample for the study because of the diversity in this specific class, which serves as a General Education course as well as a required course for the Women and Gender Studies major and minor. The professor who is teaching the course will administer the survey, which consists of 15 questions designed to elicit student views on queer theory. In addition, there will be interviews administered to three specific people about their knowledge of

Queer Studies: one person with little knowledge of queer theory who will be selected from a non Women and Gender Studies class, one person with some knowledge of queer theory who will be selected in association with the Women's Center at The College at Brockport, and one person well-informed on queer theory who will be selected from within the Women and Gender Studies major. It is important to conduct interviews in this specific way because the surveys alone may not produce sufficient depth in responses due to a possible lack in knowledge or understanding of Queer Studies. The participants will be college students of any age, gender, sex, race, sexual orientation, and identity.

The contributions of this project are many. The purpose of this investigation is to explore whether there is the need for Queer Studies as an area of knowledge on college campuses, and to find out how important it is to make queer theory accessible to college students. If the study results show this need, college campuses may be more inclined to add Queer Studies into the curriculum. Additionally, if the results of this study show a demand for more queer spaces on college campuses, this research could lead to the creation of a Queer Center or lounge that would give LGBTQIA individuals a safe environment to discuss LGBTQIA-related issues. Similarly, if the research demonstrates a need for queer knowledge, administrators, students, and faculty could use the findings of this study to institute more queer-centered classes. This study could also uncover a need for more sensitivity training being offered by the school to help people better understand the LGBTQIA community.



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